

How the State Budget Affects Your Rates And How NUD Is Advocating for Your Interests



Commissioner
Margaret Wiggins

Your rates for water and sewer service were not raised this year, but ours were! Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) increased the wholesale cost to purchase our District's water supply by 8.4%.

Balancing the budget has not been easy during the economic downturn. Because we have worked diligently to manage your money well, we are able to absorb the increases in wholesale and inflationary costs this year. Unfortunately, King County has already informed us of an increase in charges for sewage treatment coming in January.

Our wholesalers, (SPU supplies our water and King County Wastewater Treatment Division (KCWTD) provides us with sewage treatment services), also pay fees to the state regulatory agencies, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Ecology (DOE). NUD can hold down our internal operating costs, but state regulatory fees affect our wholesale rates.

Until recently, DOH and DOE were funded by the excise tax on all revenues received by agencies like NUD; last year we paid nearly a million dollars directly to the state. Now these state agencies are charging fees only to our wholesalers. These fees aren't tracked in our budget, but we pay them all the same through the wholesale rates.

Who is making sure these government agencies are using the money as efficiently as possible? NUD is glad to partner with Washington Association of Water and Sewer Districts (WASWD) who will help monitor the future plans coming from these agencies. I regularly attend the association meetings to keep up with these issues.

I also attend the twice a month advisory committee (MWPAAC) meetings for all local sewer utilities that connect to KCWTD for sewage treatment. The WTD director advised the group of a new standard coming down from DOE/EPA affecting a cleanup project for Duwamish River that empties into Puget Sound. The group was asked to write the EPA protesting the impossible new standard that could cause huge rate increases and accomplish very little in cleaner water. As your representative, I wrote a letter of protest, as did many others.

What can you do? Petition your elected representatives who vote to allow increases in fees and taxes levied on your utilities—costs that ultimately come from YOUR pocket. Tell them "Enough Already!" Please know your commissioners use every influence we have to continually advocate for keeping your rates low while getting the job done right. 💧

Upcoming Events



Get your garden ready NOW for spring planting with another **FREE Savvy Gardener class!**

WHEN: Tues, 9/30/14, 6:30-8pm

WHERE: NUD Building at 6830 NE 185th St. in Kenmore.

COST: FREE, open to anyone!

"Incredible Edibles: Increasing Your Success & Sustainability!"

Landscape designer Emily Bishton will share fall tips to keep your edible garden in fighting shape, on topics like:

- Pest & disease prevention
- Planning your crop rotation
- Easy soil-building & weed-control techniques
- Natural solutions to common PNW garden problems
- And more! Your questions are welcome!

Pre-register now to reserve your spot at jguthrie@nud.net or (425) 398-4400 x113. 💧

Smart Irrigation to Save Water and

The average household water consumption more than doubles in summer—mostly due to irrigation. You can lower your landscape's water needs AND your water bill with a few simple steps.

- ▶ **Water at the right time.** Early morning is best so you don't lose all that water to evaporation.
- ▶ **Know your soil.** Irrigate at the rate your soil absorbs best. Short, repeated watering cycles help dry soil absorb better and avoid runoff.

- ▶ **Monitor leaks.** Little leaks add up to big bills! Check all hose connections for drips and replace washers as needed.
- ▶ **Mulch.** Slow evaporation by putting a 2-inch layer of mulch on your planting beds. Bonus: less weeding required!

More tips for efficient summer water use—including guides on when to water for plant type—can be found at www.savingwater.org. 💧

Sewer Backups Can Cost Thousands!

Take Care of Your Sewer: Watch What You Flush



Sewer line repairs can cost well over \$10,000 in some cases. Unlike many surrounding cities, NUD takes responsibility for the sewer line service pipes located in the public right-of-way, which bear the heaviest repair costs.

can provide advice and records and determine limits of responsibility.

No one wants the health risks, environmental damage and mess sewer line failures can cause. The articles below highlight the easiest and simplest way to protect your sewer: take care what you pour down it.

However, the sewer line on your private property is yours to care for. But please contact us first when you have a problem! At the very least, we

F.O.G. and other buildup over time clog up sewers—just like arteries!



F.O.G. Clogs

What is F.O.G. and why should you care?

Nearly 50% of all sewage overflows nationwide are caused by homeowners who improperly dispose of FOG—everyday fats, oils and grease.

How can you prevent F.O.G. buildup?

- 1. Scrape and wipe first**—Take a paper towel to all pots, pans and dishes with heavy grease buildup before washing—grease enters the sewer through the dishwasher too! The towel can also be composted with your food scraps.
- 2. Avoid in-sink garbage disposals**—the surest way to clog your sewer arteries! All that food (including greasy scraps) misses the garbage and goes straight to the drain. Use a sink strainer instead.
- 3. For proper disposal**—Cool excess grease, pour into a container like a coffee can or food jar, cover, and place in the trash.

What NOT to Flush

NUD recently discovered a private sewer line filled with rags, diapers and disposable wipes. The owners were faced with a badly deteriorated system about to fail—and the heavy cost of replacing it! The costs skyrocket if a private sewer backup ends up damaging the public system.

But it can all be avoided! Being vigilant about what you flush helps keep your sewer line clear.

Items to trash—NEVER flush:

- 1 ANY disposable cleaning wipes, baby wipes or facial wipes.** The package might say 'flushable,' 'eco-friendly' or 'bio-degradable.' They are NOT! Clumps of these will inevitably cause a sewer clog.
- 2 Diapers or nursing pads**
- 3 Personal hygiene products**
- 4 Bathroom trash: Floss, Q-tips, cotton balls, tissues**
- 5 Cleaning products and chemicals**
- 6 Kitty litter**
- 7 Medicines**

Find links to more information on maintaining your sewer's health at www.nud.net. Call our office anytime if you have questions. 💧

Proven sewer health tips



It may seem inconvenient, but you're buying your private sewer line years of life with these measures. You're saving yourself the money and hassle of sewer backups. And you're doing the right thing for the environment.

Learn more about F.O.G. prevention at www.nud.net. Our office has free food scrapers and grease can lids—just stop by and ask! 💧

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Board of Commissioner Meetings are held at the District Office on the first and third Monday of each month at 5:30pm (except holidays)



District Office

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